

President Obama said that Republican Party resistance in the U.S. debt ceiling talks would risk Social Security checks not going out to seniors on Aug. 3. While the news may rattle many seniors, GOP members did not seem to flinch.

"That's not leadership; that is sad and pathetic," said Rep. Allen West, a freshman Republican from a senior citizen-heavy district in South Florida. He said that the country could still pay Social Security and other programs using money that is coming in to the system, and if they say that they cannot, "Then they are liars."

This discourse underlies the deep mistrust between the White House and congressional Republicans. Since the wave of freshman GOP representatives arrived in the 2010 elections, there have been very few opportunities where both sides stood on the same ground. Many believe that this divide could prove the wedge between finding an agreement on the debt ceiling crisis.

Tea Party members share a very different view of the ramifications of default than do the White House and the Treasury. "I certainly think you will see some short-term volatility," said Rep. Austin Scott of Georgia, the president of the freshman class. "In the end, the sun is going to come up tomorrow."

This mentality is allowing some members to take a more bold approach to the negotiations and potentially take the U.S. into default. This is the difficulty Speaker Boehner and Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell face as they seek to find a deal. Even if they agree to a measure, there is no assurance that the rest of the caucus will follow.

Many GOP freshmen were victorious over Republican incumbents due to their vote on the bank bailout during the height of the financial crisis. With that in their minds, they are reluctant to vote for any measure that raises the debt ceiling or institutes new tax revenue, no matter how grave the consequences.

Senate Democrats have countered this growing sentiment aggressively. Senate majority leader Harry Reid cast the decision facing Congress as a choice between two doors. "Behind door

number one is a choice the chairman of the Federal Reserve calls 'catastrophic,'" Reid said. "The secretary of the Treasury says that if we open that same door, it could lead to a financial crisis 'more severe than the crisis from which we are only now starting to recover.' And the majority of the American people we represent say opening that door would be 'disastrous.' Not just a bad idea, not one that would lead to discomfort – but one that would lead to disaster."

"It wouldn't be just irresponsible to make that choice," Reid said. "We would be out of our minds."